Case Study: Euromaidan

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FEB 04, 2025

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The protests that rocked Ukraine in 2014 was one of the first political topics I took notice of, purely because this was around the time I started consuming this type of media online. I was far too young to understand anything at the time, but it was fascinating to watch these protests steadily lead to open warfare in the Donbas & a military intervention by Russia. Later, once I was more well read & networked in these matters, I would eventually come across like minded people online that were active at the time. Most of these people were (and many still are) members of militant groups like Azov, Misanthropic Division, Right Sector, or the Ukrainian National Assembly.

Although Western media tended to portray the Euromaidan protests as being composed of liberal democrats, this is a gross distortion of the truth made for propaganda purposes. This attitude continues today, where many on the Right consider it to be part of the Obama era regime change policy to spread liberal hegemony, which is also a huge generalization that doesn't reflect the reality of the situation.

In reality, Euromaidan & the revolution occurred due to a hugely complex set of factors. In retrospect, it was virtually inevitable that the government would be overthrown as they managed to upset virtually the entire political spectrum for some reason or another. Above all, the revolution was driven by nationalist concern. The widespread corruption & lack of development was generally manageable for the Ukrainian populace, the president selling out the country to Russia despite the widespread support for closer integration with the West was not.

For the bulk of readers, who are American, this was comparable to US politicians allowing the Chinese to hold soft power over the country. Rather than follow in the footsteps of countries like Kazakhstan, becoming Russian puppets, Ukrainians wished to follow the path of the Baltic states & secure their sovereignty by joining the West.

In this article, I will try to lay out the complex situation that led to the revolution & war in the Donbas as an example for our own struggles. I will also look at the place the Ukrainian "Far-Right" had in these events, from Right Sector protestors in Kyiv to Azov Battalion defending the gates of Mariupol.

This article is dedicated to the Azov Battalion.

History

To start, let's look at the underlying problems that plagued Ukraine prior to the catalyst of the revolution. Spoiler alert, it's exactly what you would expect from an Eastern European country. Corruption was widespread from top to bottom. This goes from individual police officers to the president himself. During the years prior, many Ukrainian opposition politicians attempted to change this to no avail. Many of these politicians were actually arrested under dubious circumstances, such as the former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko. Funnily enough, she was actually an oligarch herself who turned into a reformer in the late 2000's. Something something The Populist Delusion & whatnot.

Another important topic was the Constitution of Ukraine. There's nothing particularly unique about it, but during a separate political crisis in 2004 the constitution was amended in a way that substantially limited the power of the President, effectively making it more in line with the systems common throughout the West & putting more power into the hands of parliament. In 2010, the Yanukovych government reversed these changes. This was hugely unpopular, and many say that this started the political crisis that eventually culminated in the Euromaidan.

The true tipping point came in 2013. At this time, Ukraine was seeking closer relations with the EU. The parliament was working on joining an association & trade agreement, though talks of outright joining NATO or the EU were not yet happening. Despite overwhelming support in parliament & the public, Yanukovych shut down the agreement & began to instead foster closer relations with Russia & the Eurasian Customs Unit, which is an EU knockoff preceding BRICS. To say this was unpopular is an understatement.

This led to the first protests on November 21st, 2013. At this point the protests were completely peaceful, and only included around 1,000 to 3,000 protestors which were overwhelmingly local students. This changed on the 30th, when these protests were cleared out by the Berkut special police forces, in a quite violent manner. A few days later, on December 1st, about 500,000 locals joined the protests. Although the initial protests were simply about the president unilaterally moving towards Russia, it's clear that later protests were more generally antigovernment in retaliation for the police's actions. This would become a feedback loop where the police would become increasingly violent in their efforts, and the protesters would become more radical in response. It took about three weeks for protests decrying the president's decision to turn into a widely antigovernment armed insurrection.

The actions the government took on November 30th are important to look at. For context, Berkut is riot police unit but is more similar to a paramilitary force. They are roughly equivalent to the Russian OMON or Italian Gendarmerie. During their clearing operation, they mercilessly beat several hundred protesters leading to about 80 serious injuries. The also attacked several random passersby & journalists that happened to be in the area but weren't part of the protest. Eventually, they beat down a door to a local Monastery where protesters were hiding out. 3 protesters were arrested & have been missing since this event, you can assume what happened there. Berkut would be a significant faction throughout the protests, and would be outright banned after the revolution with many members prosecuted.

This harsh overreaction by the government is the true catalyst for the larger Euromaidan protests, far more than even the president's previous decisions. Within 3 days, the protests were suddenly over 200 times the size, as well as forming armed self defense groups to take the police head on. This behavior is endemic to government attempts at stifling opposition, and usually has the opposite effect. Similar examples can be seen in Syria during the Arab Spring & the Boston Tea Party.

On December 1st, the government banned any protests in most of Kyiv's typical locations. Regardless, the protests once again reignited & this time had substantial support from opposition parties, as well as half a million people. This included establishment support, such as future president Poroshenko who was another oligarch turned reformer. Although the protests were initially peaceful & took place in an area where they were allowed, a large group eventually set out to recapture the location of the previous protest. This is where we started seeing groups armed with makeshift shields, baseball bats, and other improvised weapons to take in Berkut & Interior Troops.

There was a substantial amount of violence around the city by this point, mainly protesters throwing bricks & molotovs while police fired rubber bullets & tear gas. Someone stole a bulldozer & tried to tear down the fence surrounding the Presidential Administration building, this was stopped by more moderate protesters. Faggots. Berkut also stopped a convoy making its way to the suburbs where the President's Mansion was located. You can probably guess what their goal was.

Most of the city was overrun, protesters took control of several government buildings & won a fight with Berkut while they were defending the statue of Lenin, seriously injuring many officers. The statue was defaced, while protesters continued to control most of the city. Certain opposition leaders decried the violence & insisted that this was meant to be a peaceful protest, while others openly called for a revolution. As time went on, the crowd shifted towards the ladder.

At this point I should mention the theories about 'agent provocateurs' in the crowd. For thise unaware, an agent provocateur is an undercover agent sent by the government to both commit violent actions & encourage violence in the crowd. The reason is to give the government a pretext to violently clear out protestors. This charge is brought up often, even during the 2020 BLM riots. In reality, it's usually an excuse made by more moderate types to distance themselves from the violent actors. Despite claims that the violent protestors were actually paid by the government or undercover Berkut officers, this is incredibly unlikely given the shear number of violent protesters & amount of damage down to the police forces. Sending out agent provocateurs would be both pointless & counterproductive for the government at this point.

I should also mention the concept of Titushky. This refers to paid thugs that counteract the protestors, while also blending in with them. They are generally hooligans, members of gangs, etc. For much of the Euromaidan protests, titushky forces actually outnumbered the official police & military force. They would generally start fights with protesters, but often tried to blend in first in order to sew confusion & disorder in the crowd, giving the police an opening to break it up. Titushky is common in Russia & other post-Soviet states, allegedly because paid about 100USD a day to fight Euromaidan protesters.

On the 11th, Berkut attempted to clear out the main square by massive force. Despite numbering around 10,000 (including Internal Troops & Titushky), they were still outnumbered by the self defense forces alone, not including the normal protesters. This only became worse as a constant stream of volunteers came in to assist with the defense. By the time morning came, government forces retreated from the square in defeat.

On January 19th, in reaction to new laws banning most protest activities, a crowd of 200,000 attempted to march on the parliament building. Berkut intercepted the crowd, leading to one of the most violent clashes yet where 3 protesters were shot & killed.

Keep in mind that this wasn't a collection of various protests, just major incidents. Throughout this time, Kyiv was basically a warzone. The city was occupied by up to 800,000 protesters with permanent encampments being supplied with gear & supplies by others outside the city. At no point did the government forces have any control of the situation, and were essentially incapable of retaking ground as protesters set up barricades & entrenched themselves.

The apogee of Euromaidan began on the 18th of February. Right Sector, a nationalist organization that will be touched on later, rallied its members to launch an offensive on the areas still held by government forces. Other groups quickly joined in on the offensive & began advancing. The offensive was aimed at the parliament building & city hall. Throughout the advance, protesters threw rocks & molotovs, as well as occupying several buildings. Notably, this was the first time where Berkut units were truly fighting for their lives. Many units were surrounded & only managed to escape by firing massive amounts of non-lethal rounds & stun grenades at the crowd. At one point, Berkut officers had to resort to throwing bricks at protesters. One group were almost killed when the building they were firing from was set on fire. Protesters managed to make entry into the Canadian embassy, using it as a makeshift hospital. Police launched several counterattacks, including the use of armored vehicles, none of which succeeded. In the middle of the night, the government cut power to the outside lights of Kyiv.

During negotiations that night, the president refused to back down & threatened opposition leaders with arrest. By this point, it became quite clear that neither side was going to give in. Throughout the 19th, Right Sector would continue to take a leading role in offensive operations while more moderate opposition leaders continued to negotiate a brief ceasefire. The SBU (Ukie intelligence agency) reported that several military armories had allegedly been raided. Although it was not discovered until 2015, a military aircraft flew to Russia in order to acquire more riot equipment. The military was given the order to mobilize, while Right Sector & its allies refused to join the ceasefire, taking many protesters with them to continue the assault.

The 20th was particularly violent. During an offensive in Independence Square, dozens of both Berkut & Interior Troops were captured by protesters. They made the discovery that almost all of these troops were 18-20 year old conscripts from eastern regions of Ukraine, mainly Russian speaking & far from Kyiv. They also captured a Russian national wearing the uniform of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs, taking his patch as proof of Russian involvement. The railways & roads leading into Kyiv were shut down & sometimes sabotaged. Allegedly, an armory near Lviv was raided & the equipment brought to Kyiv. Throughout this time, police & protesters were actively shooting each other. Police claimed a sniper had wounded 20 officers, while police were photographed firing into crowds indiscriminately. Titushky were also active with firearms.

By this point, the ruling Party of Regions had begun to collapse. Many members resigned from the party, including the mayor of Kyiv. Others began planning on escape. Many had already been personally sanctioned by the EU & US, so they made plans to escape to Russia. The leader of the party, Oleksandr Yefremov, would travel to Luhansk to begin planning succession. Loyalists in Crimea also traveled to Russia to plan succession. I should make it clear that most members of the Party of Regions resigned & condemned the party throughout the protests, all that was left by the revolution was hardcore loyalists & pro-Russian types. An emergency parliamentary session was held, the Communist Party & Party of Regions did not attend. They unanimously voted to restrain the police from using any violent force & stopped the military mobilization at the 11th hour. The SBU briefly continued its preparations, including taking multiple military units from Crimea under its command, but eventually folded as well due to dissent in its ranks. Multiple generals refused to involve their troops against their own citizens, with many resigning. Across the country, entire local governments & police forces defected to the opposition.

On February 21st, an agreement was finally signed between opposition leaders & the government, mediated by EU & Russian officials. Although the agreement met most of the protest goals, it did not remove the ruling government or call for the arrest of Berkut commanders, officials, or the president. At the same time, the parliament voted unanimously to return to the 2004 constitution & send all Berkut & Interior Ministry troops back to their barracks.

In spite of this, Right Sector called to completely overthrow the government & ignored the agreement. Many protesters agreed. Fortunately, all of the government troops in Kyiv disappeared that night. They saw the writing in the wall & decided to stand down rather than have all of the blame be thrown on them. I should remind you that virtually all of these troops were young conscripts from far away. Protesters seized control over all government buildings in Kyiv in their absence.

The president & most of his ministers would flee the country to Russia. Many were captured by border guards, while others made it out. By this point the only people left in government were opposition politicians, and the former government effectively ceased to exist. In the days immediately following this, the government immediately began hunting down former loyalists. This led to interesting situations like the SBU arresting some of its own officers. The new government also began the process of lustration, the removal from public office of civil servants who served under Yanukovych. This meant cleaning house of every suspected loyalist in the government, and later grew to include anyone who had previously held posts under the Soviet Union as well. This included everything from the military to the postal service. It has been extremely effective at clearing out corrupt, pro-Russian, & Communist officials. A handful of officials also died under "mysterious circumstances." Lustration was fully completed after the outbreak of war in 2022, when President Zelensky formally banned any pro-Russian party including the Party of Regions & most Leftist parties.

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Although I haven't touched on it, the former government was not without its supporters. While few travelled to Kyiv, regions in the south & east of Ukraine experienced Anti-Maidan protests throughout this time. These were fairly small, and were criticized as being organized by the former government. This is because the former government was still hugely unpopular in these areas, and the protests stopped as soon as the revolution concluded. That being said, a section of these protestors were doing so out of pro-Russian sentiment, being predominantly Russian speaking & not very fond of the Ukrainian nationalist led revolution.

On the 27th of February, Russian special operations forces would seize control & later annex Crimea. Crimea is an outright majority Russian area, so this was a fairly simple process.

The protests would begin on March 1st, the largest in Donetsk & Luhansk which both had pro-Russian governments already. Protestors briefly occupied a government building in Kharkiv, raising a Russian flag, but were removed by police. Demonstrations were also held in the south from Odessa to Zhaphorizhia. Virtually all of these were small, around 5,000 people, and met by counter protests that matched or outnumbered them. Soviet flags were common, and many protests were centered around Soviet monuments that were to be removed by the new government (protesters had already toppled the statue of Lenin in Kyiv, and had an open agenda of "decommunization").

Most of these protests eventually dropped into less than a thousand people. Even in their stronghold in Donetsk, the few hundred occupying the administration building were outnumbered by 5,000 counter protesters. Regardless, pro-Russian elements eventually managed to gather 10,000 people after an SBU raid cleared the building & arrested their leader. It should come as no surprise that many of these people were Russian citizens, or government agents. Members of the GRU, Russian military intelligence, were arrested in Donetsk on the 10th, as well as more separatist leaders.

There were several deaths throughout this period, as hardened nationalists from Kyiv appeared to confront pro-Russian protesters, along with football ultras & the like. Most protests tended to look forced, meaning not grassroots, as they tended to simply disappear after sundown. This was especially true in regions like Kharkov & Odessa. It was fairly obvious to all involved that this was not driven by Russian speakers being upset with a Ukrainian nationalist government, and was instead the Russian government meddling in their affairs.

Most of the protesters on the ground, the ones that weren't foreign agents, were Leftists. Communist party members, Socialists, etc. The same parties that were banned by Zelensky for treason in 2022. Their arguments, as well as Putin himself, was that the new government was a coup by Neo-Nazis, Anti-Semites, and my all time favorite made up word, "Russophobes." They would also demand that organizations like Right Sector be banned, as it was now showing up in force to confront them.

This all continued for some time, as protesters & counter protesters would clash in various spots while the SBU attempted to hunt down leaders & Russian agents. April 6th was the day that the insurgency officially started, as pro-Russian elements began attacking SBU headquarters in the Donbas. Similar attempts were made in Kharkiv without success. This lasted throughout the following months, as well as the normal protests. Rifles & explosives were often found among protesters. The hottest areas were around Luhansk & Donetsk, where locals formed self defense groups to defend against separatist forces.

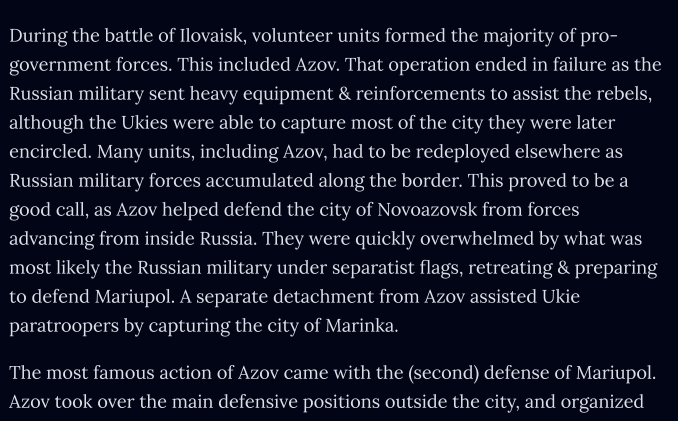
The first major separatist attack was on the city of Slovisnsk in the Donbas. Igor Girkin, a Russian & former FSB officer, gathered a 52-man element of combat veterans (Chechnya, Yugoslavia, Iraq) and seized key buildings in the city. This is a cool character.

Ukies officially began the "AntiTerrorist Operation on the 15th, recapturing a previously seized airfield. The military conducted operation on the 17th, when a UAF air raid destroyed a separatist checkpoint. Small scale bombings, assassination attempts, & government building raids continued.

As part of the Siege of Sloviansk, still under Girkin's control & now the first major battle of the war, Right Sector conducted a raid into the city which ended in a gunfight. The orders came from the President of Ukraine, lacking confidence in the military. A few days prior, 6 Ukrainian BMPs defected to the rebels flying Soviet flags. This would serve to foreshadow the abysmal state of the Ukrainian military at the time & reliance on grassroots nationalist paramilitaries in the near future.

This is what I will focus on, rather than the Donbas War itself.

Azov Battalion



Slavaboos used to love this photo back in the day

It's only fitting to start with the most famous formation, which also followed a path that's similar to all others, Azov Battalion. What became Azov was originally founded in Kharkiv by Andriy Biletsky. Biletsky was a longtime member of the Ukie nationalist movements, taking leadership positions in the organizations Patriots of Ukraine & the Social-National Assembly. He was arrested during the Euromaidan protests as a political prisoner, later released by the new government. He gathered volunteers from the two aforementioned organizations, as well as local ultras & Euromaidan activists, and created the Black Corps as a militia to reinforce the local security forces against pro-Russian elements. Despite having roughly 60 lightly armed members, the Black Corps are credited with stopping Kharkiv from falling to separatists as state security pulled out in March. The Black Corps continued to defend Kharkiv until separatists pulled away from the region.

In May, Black Corps moved near Mariupol and began establishing itself as a volunteer unit under the government title of "Special Task Police Patrol." The unit grew to several hundred members, gained equipment from the government itself, & formally became known as Azov Battalion. Most of the unit were Russian speakers as well as Euromaidan activists from the prior months. Immediately following this, they were part of the task force to capture Mariupol from separatists. Azov & Dnipro-1 (another volunteer unit) were the spearhead of the advance & quickly captured the city.

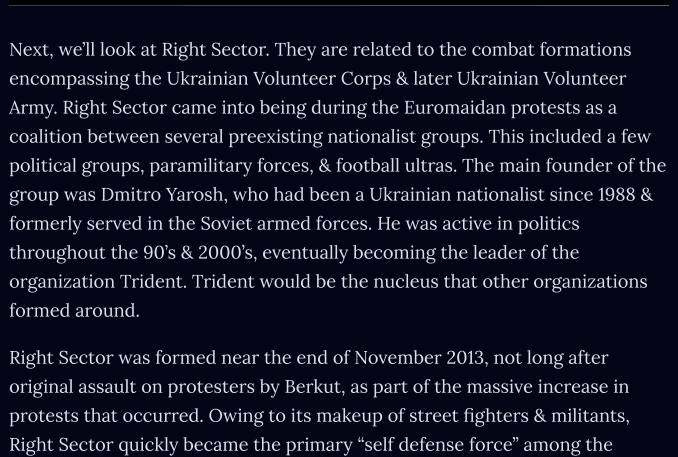
During the battle of Ilovaisk, volunteer units formed the majority of pro-government forces. This included Azov. That operation ended in failure as the Russian military sent heavy equipment & reinforcements to assist the rebels, although the Ukies were able to capture most of the city they were later encircled. Many units, including Azov, had to be redeployed elsewhere as Russian military forces accumulated along the border. This proved to be a good call, as Azov helped defend the city of Novoazovsk from forces advancing from inside Russia. They were quickly overwhelmed by what was most likely the Russian military under separatist flags, retreating & preparing to defend Mariupol. A separate detachment from Azov assisted Ukie paratroopers by capturing the city of Marinka.

The most famous action of Azov came with the (second) defense of Mariupol. Azov took over the main defensive positions outside the city, and organized militias among the citizens. This same model was followed 8 years later during the defense of Kyiv in 2022. Azov successfully defeated separatist forces & launched a counter attack, pushing them out from the area. Following this battle, as well as similar successes by the military, a ceasefire was signed as separatists lost momentum. This was the much despised (& ignored) Minsk I protocol. During the lull in fighting, the government officialized the volunteer forces as units under the newly created National Guard (this replaced the Internal Troops, disbanded after the revolution, and continued the same mission). The membership of the battalions remained unchanged, save the expansion to regiment size.

In the opening days of 2015, rebels began shelling Mariupol again. Rather than wait for the inevitable assault, Azov Regiment spearheaded an offensive pushing separatists back several dozen kilometers & out of artillery range of Mariupol. Azov fought in the area, alongside other military & volunteer forces, for months until the Minsk II ceasefire. To showcase how Azov was viewed at this time, the government rotated Azov out of the area & replaced them with military units. There wasn't an agenda behind this, it's standard practice to let units recuperate. Regardless, there were protests in Mariupol over fears that separatists would break through the lines without Azov there to stop them. By this time, Azov was widely known & supported by Ukrainians, even those not involved with the nationalist movement.

Azov would continue, not only as a military unit but as its own nationalist movement as well. Azov defended Mariupol in 2022, despite being besieged for months. They once again gained national attention by being the bulk of Azovstahl defenders. Most of the unit was killed or ordered to surrender in 2022, however the surviving members would form the nucleus of the expanded 12th Azov Brigade, 3rd Separate Assault Brigade, and various local special forces units of the Territorial Defense Forces (local state sponsored militias). These are some of the most successful & well know units of the war, and maintain their links to the nationalist movements.

Right Sector



Next, we'll look at Right Sector. They are related to the combat formations encompassing the Ukrainian Volunteer Corps & later Ukrainian Volunteer Army. Right Sector came into being during the Euromaidan protests as a coalition between several preexisting nationalist groups. This included a few political groups, paramilitary forces, & football ultras. The main founder of the group was Dmitro Yarosh, who had been a Ukrainian nationalist since 1988 & formerly served in the Soviet armed forces. He was active in politics throughout the 90's & 2000's, eventually becoming the leader of the organization Trident. Trident would be the nucleus that other organizations formed around.

Right Sector was formed near the end of November 2013, not long after original assault on protesters by Berkut, as part of the massive increase in protests that occurred. Owing to its makeup of street fighters & militants, Right Sector quickly became the primary "self defense force" among the protesters. As the protests grew more violent, Right Sector would gradually take on a more prominent & leading role in the movement. In terms of extremism, the group was always a step ahead of the general protests. Early on, they encouraged supporters to bring materials for molotov cocktails & bombs. Later, they would seize weapons from police stations & military armories in western Ukraine (earlier I brought up one of instance in Lviv).

Right Sector was by far the most effective & organized group during the protests, amassing upwards of 20,000 supporters armed with any manner of weapons. Most of the violent clashes with police near the end of the protests, the ones where government forces were routed or captured, was Right Sector. They were especially targeted by the government for all this, though that didn't matter in the end.

The most important thing Right Sector did during the protests was ignore the agreement made on February 21st, continuing their assault on the government in spite of opposition leaders asking protesters to stand down. They effectively pushed the revolution over the finish line rather than let moderates stifle it at the 11th hour.

During the final hours of the former government, Right Sector members would raid the personal residence of Viktor Pshonka. Pshonka was the prosecutor general & is such a corrupt figure it's funny. He was like a comic book representation of a corrupt politician. Regardless, during this raid the Right Sector members captured massive amounts of data documenting the corruption of the former government, mainly in the form of business ledgers. These would be extremely important during the prosecution of former government officials during lustration. As a fun fact, one of the individuals in the ledger was Paul Manafort. You might remember Manafort as the campaign manager that Trump fired in 2016 after it was revealed that he was lobbying on behalf of several foreign governments, including the former Ukrainian government.

The first combat operation from Right Sector was on April 20th, a small raid against the separatist held Sloviansk that ended in failure after the unit was discovered by a roadside checkpoint. Right Sector initially denied involvement, on behalf of the government, for several years.

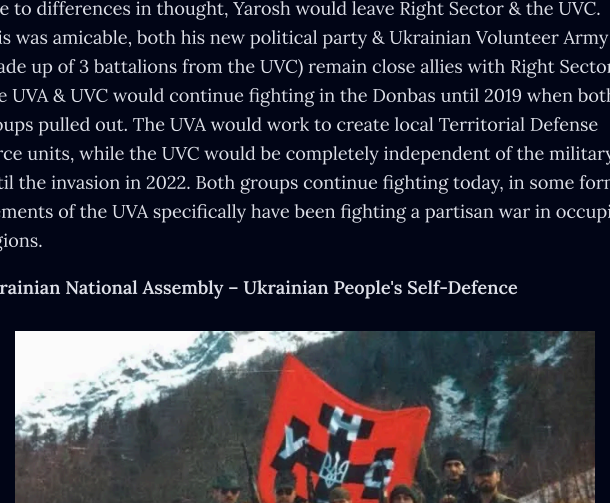
The Right Sector Ukrainian Volunteer Corps (UVC) was formed in July. Due to tensions with the Internal Ministry, the UVC operated completely independently rather than being a part of the special police patrol force, utilizing the weapons they acquired during the revolution. The UVC would have around 5,000 fighters.

UVC forces immediately headed to the frontline in Donetsk, assisting the Ukrainian military in a number of battles while taking ground from the separatists. In August, they threatened to leave the frontlines over alleged corruption within the Interior Ministry, which had been harassing UVC fighters & seizing weapons. They demanded the new president clear out the Interior Ministry of counter-revolutionary forces, else they would turn their rifles once more on Kyiv. The government very quickly acquiesced to the group's demands, and they continued fighting.

The UVC fought alongside the military during the famous 2nd battle of Donetsk Airport, gaining the moniker "Cyborgs" from the separatists due to their stubborn defense for over 2 months. Like most volunteer battalions, the group would remain in the Donbas conducting security operations & assisted Azov Battalion in pushing separatists away from Mariupol. As the war cooled off, they would turn their activism inwards against drug dealers, smugglers, counter-revolutionary forces, & other societal ills. This led to a shootout in western Ukraine that left two people dead, as Right Sector militants that were working against a local smuggling network were confronted by corrupt police officers. There were no arrests, as it quickly became clear that the police were both working for the local mafia & the cause of the altercation.

Due to differences in thought, Yarosh would leave Right Sector & the UVC. This was amicable, both his new political party & Ukrainian Volunteer Army (made up of 3 battalions from the UVC) remain close allies with Right Sector. The UVA & UVC would continue fighting in the Donbas until 2019 when both groups pulled out. The UVA would work to create local Territorial Defense Force units, while the UVC would be completely independent of the military until the invasion in 2022. Both groups continue fighting today, in some form. Elements of the UVA specifically have been fighting a partisan war in occupied regions.

Ukrainian National Assembly – Ukrainian People's Self-Defence


ИХ БУДУТ СУДИТЬ В ЧЕЧНЕ

UNA-UNSO fighters near Grozny, 1st Chechen War

The UNA was formed in 1990, during the turbulence that proceeded the collapse of the Soviet Union. It was a group of Ukrainian nationalists that worked underground in order to assist in Ukraine gaining independence, made up primarily of veterans of the Soviet-Afghan War. Their interest in fighting Communism abroad started early, in 1991 they sent fighters to defend Lithuanian protesters from Soviet forces in the capital. During the coup attempt in 1991, the UNA sent a squad of militants to Moscow to fight the potentially reborn Soviet government. Remaining members formed armed groups in Kyiv to fight an insurgency if the coup was successful.

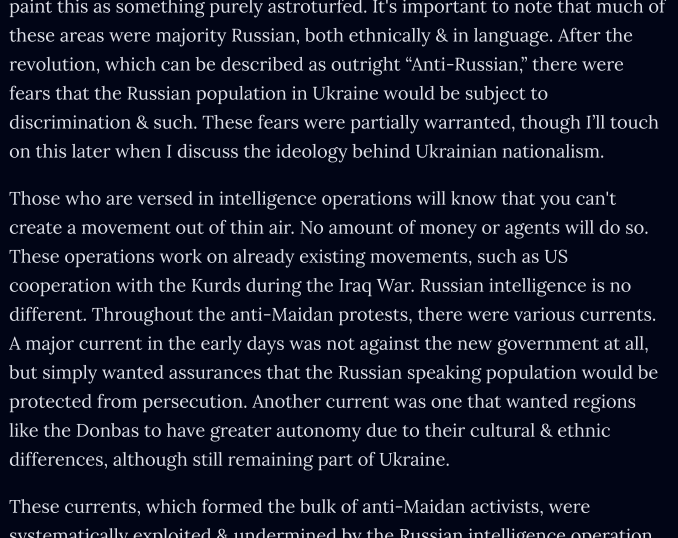
The organization was extremely active in the years following the fall of the Soviet Union & Ukrainian independence. They sent fighters to break up attempts of succession including an attempt by Russian Communists to establish a Soviet republic in Donetsk, a similar attempt in Odessa, & a group of Romanians wanting some of Western Ukraine to join Romania. They also supported the newly independent Ukrainian Orthodox Church against those still loyal to the Moscow Patriarch.

A detachment traveled to Chechnya in 1994, in order to fight the Russians. A few members also fought alongside Serbia during the Yugoslav War. Russian officials have accused the UNA of fighting alongside Georgia during the 2008 Russian invasion, but they deny this charge. They also sent fighters to Abkhazia & the Karabakh regions to fight Russians. The only time they found themselves on the same side as Russian was during the Transnistria conflict, for the purpose of protecting the Ukrainian minority in the region from Moldovans.

The UNA would be one of the organizations that joined forces to create Right Sector, with most of its armed elements also joining the UVC. Aside from that, multiple partisan groups & Territorial Defense Force units descend from UNA formations, with several retaining their "UNSO" moniker officially to this day.

The UNA was hugely influential, as it was basically the progenitor of all post-Soviet Ukrainian nationalism. They created the famous black & red flag later adopted by Right Sector that is now a generic symbol of Ukrainian nationalism. It's meant to be a Ukrainian flag covered in blood, which makes the blue turn black & yellow turn red. These colors, aside from the standard Ukie flag colors, are extremely common across the board now. They are often seen on patches & official insignia, even in the International Legion.

The Separatists



I want to briefly touch on the Donetsk/Luhansk Peoples Republics as a cautionary tale for prospective militants. Earlier, I made it pretty clear that the separatists were heavily supported by Russia & the whole movement was likely created by Russian intelligence. This is mostly true, but I don't wish to paint this as something purely astroturfed. It's important to note that much of these areas were majority Russian, both ethnically & in language. After the revolution, which can be described as outright "Anti-Russian," there were fears that the Russian population in Ukraine would be subject to discrimination & such. These fears were partially warranted, though I'll touch on this later when I discuss the ideology behind Ukrainian nationalism.

Those who are versed in intelligence operations will know that you can't create a movement out of thin air. No amount of money or agents will do so. These operations work on already existing movements, such as US cooperation with the Kurds during the Iraq War. Russian intelligence is no different. Throughout the anti-Maidan protests, there were various currents. A major current in the early days was not against the new government at all, but simply wanted assurances that the Russian speaking population would be protected from persecution. Another current was one that wanted regions like the Donbas to have greater autonomy due to their cultural & ethnic differences, although still remaining part of Ukraine.

These currents, which formed the bulk of anti-Maidan activists, were systematically exploited & undermined by the Russian intelligence operation. As these people abandoned the movement, all that was left were Russian nationalists that had the stated goal of creating a "Novorussiya" (lit. "New Russia") & in reality the creation of a Russian vassal state. Even during the war, many of the political & military leaders of the L/DPR wanted the Donbas to maintain autonomy with close links to Russia, a similar relationship as countries/regions like Belarus, Abkhazia & South Ossetia.

This didn't happen. Many of you may know some of the big names of the separatist republics, especially the military commanders that tended to be quite colorful characters. What you may not know is that basically all of them were systematically killed from 2015 to 2017. Motorola, Zakharchenko, Batman, Bolotov, Tsypkalov, Mozgovoy & others were also killed off in this period under 'suspicious' circumstances. As late as 2023, Mangushev was also quietly executed by his own forces. The only one of these that seemed to be done by Ukraine was Givi, though some question that the SBU was truly responsible. The Donbas was officially annexed by Russia in 2022, with the local militias being used as cannon fodder during the war. All of the former LPR & DPR units have been wiped out since late 2023.

This is a cautionary tale about utilizing the resources of an "allied" state. Let's say that you are Motorola, except instead of the Donbas you are fighting for Cascadia against the US government. Inevitably, countries like China & Russia absolutely will offer covert support, purely to hurt their primary geopolitical adversary. There's absolutely no reason to not accept the crates of weapons & munitions, but be very careful about them spreading their own influence & agenda. These countries don't support the Free State of Cascadia & would much rather control it themselves, making it all for nothing. The enemy of my enemy is my friend, but true friendship can only come from equal strength.

Ukrainian Nationalism

People often refer to nationalism as if it's an ideology of its own. Under the scholarly definition maybe, but not in the way we use the term nowadays. Nationalism is nothing more than a component, whichever word comes before is of far more importance than the word itself. This is why nationalist movements tend to vary wildly from culture to culture. Kurdish nationalism is very Leftist in nature, despite it being a definitively Right Wing position in the West. Many question why Dugin is a nationalist despite wanting to import the third world into Russia, and it is because he isn't actually a *Russian* nationalist so much as he is a Soviet nationalist. This is why he includes African migrants & Churkas as "Russian" while decrying actual Russian (ethnic) nationalists. His definition of Russia is essentially the Soviet Union, with its odd breed of civic nationalism.

This is actually a major split between Russian nationalists. Overtime, the camp has split between these Soviet nationalists & their mongrel allies & the Russian nationalists who are more similar to what you would encounter in the West. This is why there are many "Russian nationalists" fighting for Russia, while there are also formations like the Russian Volunteer Corps (supported by the Wontajugend nationalist group) paradoxically fighting for Ukraine currently. Many of the nationalists in Russia that don't subscribe to Duginist ideology have found better allies with Right Sector, and see themselves as defending fellow Slavs from a multicultural & neo-bolshevik regime. This was exasperated by Putin cracking down on nationalist groups throughout his presidency.

Regardless, Ukrainian Nationalism does have a specific ideology & identity. Aside from the historical context that led to creation of singular Ukrainian identity, split off from other Slav peoples, the primary individual is Stepan Bandera. Bandera is a fascinating historical character, I ask you to explore him in your own time. The short story is that he was a Ukrainian nationalist active through the thirties to the fifties. As Ukraine came under control of Germany in 1941, Bandera's Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists established an independent Ukraine in collaboration with Nazi authorities. Many of his men would fight in the various Ukrainian Wehrmacht & SS units throughout the war. He was arrested for his nationalist advocacy but only as an honorable prisoner, meaning he was treated well by German authorities. His organization continued to assist with the fight against the Soviets & even fought them after the war ended. He was killed by the KGB in Germany in 1950.

Bandera is the founding father of Ukrainian nationalism. He holds the same regards that Hitler holds with National Socialists & Lenin holds with Communists. Most disagreements in Ukie groups are settled by asking "what would Bandera do?" Although he is generally controversial, he has become more & more popular in Ukraine after Euromaidan, the war & lustration. Essentially all modern Ukie nationalist organizations claim to be spiritual successors to Bandera's OUN.

Another major facet of Ukie nationalism is the concept of "National Idea." The wolfsangel symbol used by various groups, most notably Azov, is *allegedly* the letters N & I overlayed. No one buys this. Regardless, NI is an interesting concept. Essentially, it is idea of Ukraine that takes into account its history, culture, ethnicity, geography, and spiritual matters. It is very much what one may call "romantic nationalist." This is an interesting concept because nationalism in the West has become quite basic, for lack of a better term. In Europe, nationalism has generally been reduced to purely ethnic grounds. That doesn't mean that other cultural & spiritual factors are ignored, but that they play a weaker role than they have historically & there is heavy disagreement about what exactly constitutes these things. A good example is the arguments around religion (Christianity v paganism v secularity) & certain aspects of the culture seen as 'weak' or counterintuitive. This is especially strong in America, where many definitive aspects of America are derided for being a stepping stone to modernity & there's still heavy debate on who actually counts as American. Fortunately, these conversations are finally being had & some of these issues are being ironed out.

Something odd within Ukrainian nationalism is "anti-racism" that you see here & there. This sounds weird at first glance, especially from a Western perspective. The reality is that this "racism" is actually about long standing minority groups like Greeks, ethnic Russians & Crimean Tartars. Ukraine never got hit with the migrant crisis, nor are many non-Europeans very inclined to move to an active warzone of all places. This "anti-racism" doesn't include Africans or Muslims, like it would imply in the West. These minorities can be seen as similar to the German minority in northeastern France, or maybe the Sami in northern Scandinavia. Migrants from outside of Europe are basically unthinkable & a non-issue in Ukraine. Certain minorities, namely Jews & Gypsies, are generally not considered in this. Nationalist groups often clear out gypsy camps, while Jews are treated with heavy skepticism due to their over representation in oligarchs (which also links them to corruption).

The most definitive aspect of Ukie nationalism that sets it apart from what you may see in the West is its violence. The heavy violence committed by Banderites in the 40's, Right Sector during the revolution, & the volunteer battalions during the Donbas War are not lost on Ukie nationalists. In fact, these struggles are both seen as absolutely necessary & formative actions for the movement. It's a strong point of pride that's held over the heads of other ideological groups, that the blood of nationalists is what earned Ukraine its freedom & kept its citizens safe when the government failed. This isn't just a propaganda point either, the "far-right's" role in all of these events is not lost on the general citizenry of the nation.

National Socialism, & Hitler himself, are viewed in various ways. Some see him as a threat to Ukrainian independence, others see him as a hero against bolshevism. The most common view I've encountered is that he was a hero for Germany but not Ukrainian, essentially stressing the need for a Ukrainian Hitler figure. Democracy is viewed differently from group to group. Some share the typical Fascist distaste for it, others want a more regulated form like in Athens, while others have no opinion.

Lustration/Decommunization

Earlier I brought up the campaign of lustration that started immediately after the revolution. Funnily enough, the Trump administration is currently carrying out a similar strategy in the US government right now. In Ukraine specifically, lustration refers to purging the government of any officials & civil servants who served under the old government. This was done not only against officials suspected of taking part in the widespread corruption, but also those who are seen as ideologically motivated in a similar manner. Some form of lustration takes place in virtually every major political change of power, sometimes more extreme than others. Similar measures were taken by most former ComBloc countries after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Lustration had two main goals. The first was liquidating any corrupt officials in order to build a better & more trustworthy government. The second was getting rid of Russian influence. The first was actually pretty easy, when you have an executive branch that has the willpower it's not hard to steadily track down corrupt officials. The second goal was more difficult, not only because they blend in better but also because it's difficult to do this while still respecting freedom of speech. This was not completed until 2022, when Zelensky used his wartime powers to shut down any potential traitors within the country, government or otherwise.

Decommunization was the other aspect of this, though it was more of a boots on the ground task for nationalists than a government program. As you might expect, the main project was the destruction of Soviet monument & other communist symbols. The first was the toppling of the statue of Lenin in Kyiv. It eventually culminated in the destruction of essentially every monument in the country from war memorials to government buildings, as small as minor street names. The only things that survived were a couple of war memorials, though they were altered to get rid of any Soviet iconography. This technically also included former Soviet officials, though these were already extremely rare by that time. Decommunization was mostly completed in 2022 with the banning of the Communist Party. Ukrainian soldiers continue to destroy Soviet monuments in occupied regions.

Today

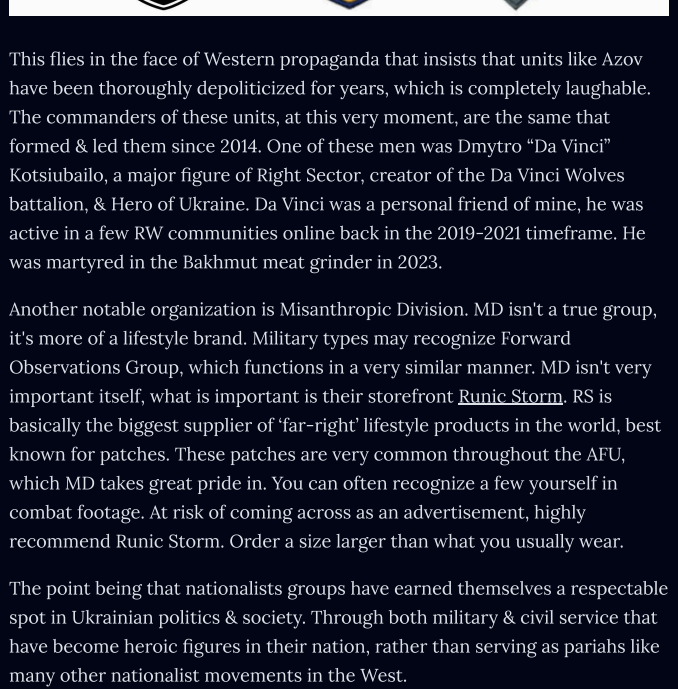
Like most nationalist movements, those in Ukraine are still extra-parliamentary. There are a few that actively campaign & have representatives in government, but most tend to structure themselves as a social movement. These groups are not unified, except by ideology, and thus appear differently throughout the country. As well, for as many active members that these movements have, there is an equal number in the more moderate parties. Many of the leading nationalists throughout 2013-2015 would wind up working with the more mainstream parties as advisers while others became legitimate military commanders.

The movement continues to affect the political landscape, whether through marching in the streets or being in the ear of major parties. This is easy because membership in organizations like Right Sector is not taboo in Ukraine. Their power has actually increased in the days since the war because their stance on the Minsk agreement & military defense was entirely vindicated in 2022. They are also probably the single most trustworthy group during wartime, where many traitors have been found.

An interesting social movement that nationalists have driven is derussification. Although it's not a government policy, it is now somewhat taboo to speak Russian in public. There's a good chance a local nationalist will scold you for not speaking Ukrainian. This has made Russian far less common in Ukraine, even in the eastern regions where it was once an outright majority.

For the most part, basically every nationalist in Ukraine is once more involved in the war effort. Those who are unable to fight do other things in the rear. Azov Battalion, today the 12th Azov Special Operations Brigade, has again distinguished itself as one of the most effective formations of the war, on top of being the bulk of the famous Azovstal defenders. The 3rd Separate Assault Brigade, formed from Azovites, is also one of the most accomplished units. Other nationalist formations like Da Vinci's Wolves or the UVA are still active & fighting as hard as they did 2014.

Below is a collection of military insignia from the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Bear in mind that all of these are official emblems used for ceremonies & issued on patches. These are just the ones I was able to easily find by checking the Wikipedia pages of units I knew from memory. You can often see even more in combat footage, either on patches or watermarked on the video.



This flies in the face of Western propaganda that insists that units like Azov have been thoroughly depoliticized for years, which is completely laughable. The commanders of these units, at this very moment, are the same that formed & led them since 2014. One of these men was Dmytro "Da Vinci" Kotsiubailo, a major figure of Right Sector, creator of the Da Vinci Wolves battalion, & Hero of Ukraine. Da Vinci was a personal friend of mine, he was active in a few RW communities online back in the 2019-2021 timeframe. He was martyred in the Bakhmut meat grinder in 2023.

Another notable organization is Misanthropic Division. MD isn't a true group, it's more of a lifestyle brand. Military types may recognize Forward Observations Group, which functions in a very similar manner. MD isn't very important itself, what is important is their storefront Runic Storm. RS is basically the biggest supplier of 'far-right' lifestyle products in the world, best known for patches. These patches are very common throughout the AFU, which MD takes great pride in. You can often recognize a few yourself in combat footage. At risk of coming across as an advertisement, highly recommend Runic Storm. Order a size larger than what you usually wear.

The point being that nationalists groups have earned themselves a respectable spot in Ukrainian politics & society. Through both military & civil service that have become heroic figures in their nation, rather than serving as pariahs like many other nationalist movements in the West.

Takeaways

Rehabilitating the image of Euromaidan among the Right is a secondary objective for this article, which I hope I have done well. I will not allow Lefty propagandist to claim an event spearheaded by nationalists, regardless of what Western foreign policy necessitates. The primary objective, as the title implies, is to use this as a learning experience for nationalist movements elsewhere in the world. This isn't to say that our situation is completely comparable or that we should follow an identical path, simply that we should look at the events & see how we can fit those tactics into our own struggle. In the military, we often do case studies in order to learn what other military leaders did in certain situations. This will start as a game where you make your own plan, given the same situation & assets, & later look at the actual events. A similar methodology can be used in politics.

The first takeaway I'll look at is the great service to the nation that nationalists carried out. From spearheading the revolution to fighting in the Donbas, these men repeatedly risked their lives in service of their country. Some of these can be seen as directly advancing their ideological agenda, but others served nothing more than the defense of Ukraine. This garnered them immense amounts of goodwill from the general population, which they can use to springboard the more unpopular facets of RW ideology that's put forward.

This is something that the Movement™ in the West has always been bad it, especially compared to the Left with their immense amount of NGOs & charities that they can use to virtue signal. Only very recently has Patriot Front begun volunteering to help victims of hurricane damage in the South last year, which had a notable impact on their public perception online & certainly garnered them a lot of goodwill in the local communities. In a movement that claims to love their people & country, it's only fitting that they actually help their people & country.

The gripes the Maidan protesters had with the former government closely mirrors many issues we may have with the US government. Namely, foreign interference from Israel, China, etc. This can be leveraged to foster anti-government sentiment from more mainstream people with mainstream ideologies. We should also learn from this that these sorts of mass movements are not carried out by nationalists. Even with their prominent role in the revolution, Right Sector only accounted for maybe 10% of the protesters. Most of the people on the ground were otherwise 'apolitical' & following the nationalists' lead. This is the best method. We will never be the majority, we must simply strive to be the leading element & set the example for the more typical people to follow.

Something you may notice about the Euromaidan uprising is its similarity to the January 6th protests in America. Like Maidan, the overwhelming majority of this crowd was fairly mainstream conservatives. If the US had its own version of Right Sector to take charge of the crowd, perhaps they wouldn't have stopped at prancing around the Capital Building. Perhaps a revolutionary element could have led this crowd to face off with the DCMPD, seize government buildings, and all the good stuff. It's something to think about.

Another thing I will point out is the dual face of Ukie nationalists. As I pointed out earlier, these movements exist as both independent organizations & as members of major political parties. This allows them to push their unadulterated agenda in the streets while also influencing the government itself. The movement in the US is chronically bad at working with others. It's not uncommon for various defeatists to decry attempts for our guys to join the Republican Party in order to influence it from within & steadily replace the old guard NeoCons as they retire & die off. The Ukies prove that you can have it both ways, both inside & outside government, & utilize multiple strategies to advance the cause. I've seen no less than 3 pictures of new White House officials holding copies of BAM (& 1 with Mein Kampf) since the inauguration. You can have both independent organizations & 'infiltrators,' you just have to learn how to work with each other.

A final point I'll make is make sure your membership isn't made up of faggots. If they were in Ukraine, would they join Azov Battalion? If California were to breakaway & declare itself a "People's Republic," would they fight? Or would they continue being contrarian & defeatist online perpetually? Something to think about when weighing the actual value of any person or organization calling themselves "nationalist." Over the years it's become quite clear that many so-called nationalist groups are anything but, and are more aptly called "cliques of autists that happened to come across /pol/ in 2015." Just food for thought.

Слава Україні, Hail Victory.

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Logan's Rant Feb 4
What's tragic is that they never killed the Jews who were swiftly installed over them. They're allowed to be anti-Russian, but if they touched Zelensky or demanded a government of non-Chosen people, the U.S. and NATO would likely have cracked down.
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Roy0501 Feb 17
Another war where dumb goyim slaughter each other. To make the whole thing even more in-your-face fuckery, the "leader" of Ukraine is a rat-faced tribe member(they don't even disguise it anymore) who has ordered the Milton to kidnap unwilling men and send them to the front lines. All of this while he allowed his money-swindling, Kike brethren to leave the country by the plane load. No wonder Jews don't respect us.
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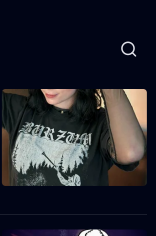

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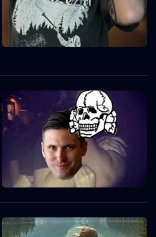

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